

Communique

Atlas of Living Australia Advisory Board

MEETING #19, November 2023

The 19th meeting of the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) Advisory Board was held on 22nd November 2023. Board participants included Catherine Byrne, David Cantrill, Robyn Cleland, Margie Jenkins, Matt Miles, Toni Moate, Rebecca Pirzl & Andre Zerger. We were also pleased to be joined by Dax Kellie, Kylie Morrow, Dean Pigden, Erin Roger and Cam Slatyer from the ALA.

New Board Appointments

We welcomed two new board members to the ALA including Dr. Catherine Byrne (Senior Curator of Zoology, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery) representing Australia's biological collections peak bodies, and Dr Rebecca Pirzl (Branch Head, Science and ANBG Branch Department) representing the Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water.

Director's Update

Dr Andre Zerger provided an update on major strategic activities, partnerships and progress since the last meeting in July 2023. The last few months have been dominated by the ALA, in partnership with CSIRO's National Research Collections Australia, hosting several [international events](#).

- The Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG) Annual Conference is a major international event for the biodiversity informatics community. The ALA and CSIRO were proud to host the 2023 TDWG conference in Hobart attracting a fantastic group of international and domestic attendees.

- On 18 October, the 30th Annual Governing Board Meeting (GB30) of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) kicked off at the National Portrait Gallery with a gala dinner hosted at the National Museum of Australia where Minister for the Environment and Water Hon. Tanya Plibersek delivered an opening [speech](#), affirming Australia's commitment to collaboration on international biodiversity matters and informed by robust biodiversity data.
- The Governing Board week concluded on Friday, with the ALA and CSIRO hosting an international symposium titled [The Changing Face of Biological Collections – data, science, and applications](#). This event involved GBIF delegates as well as a suite of national stakeholders to present, discuss and explore the increasingly important role of biological collections in supporting biodiversity science.

Collectively leading and engaging in these international events became a major focus for the team but it was pleasing to know ALA operational systems and data functions continued effectively through this period.

New Biodiversity Data Infrastructure Capabilities

The last quarter saw the ALA launch two important national biodiversity applications including the Australian Seedbank Portal and the Australian Reference Genome Atlas (pilot).

Collectively these will make a major contribution to ensuring that data related to Australian biodiversity is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. Both products have been delivered in close collaboration with several project partners including the Australian Seedbank Partnership, BioPlatforms Australia, Australian BioCommons, and Australian Research Data Commons, including through significant co-investment.

Research Impact

The ALA supports many sectors, however, ultimately the benefit we deliver to the Australian and international research community provides an important indicator of impact. To ensure the ALA has sound awareness of the key research sectors and changes in use patterns, it maintains an active science publication tracking system with cited science publications tracked and published at <https://www.ala.org.au/ala-cited-publications/>.

From June–October 2023, the ALA supported 152 published articles, with 104 of these articles directly using or citing hosted ALA data in their analyses. The board were presented an overview of the recent scientific impact and key research

domains that rely on data and infrastructure provided by the ALA.

2023 User Satisfaction Survey Results

The board was provided with a briefing on the results of the 2023 User Satisfaction Survey results by Dr Dax Kellie and Kylie Morrow. This was the second formal user satisfaction survey conducted by the ALA and thus the first to provide longitudinal data.

A total of 1,201 participants completed the survey, up from 704 the previous year. The results indicate continued very high user satisfaction results that exceed industry norms. 81% of users are either satisfied or very satisfied with the data and infrastructure delivered by the ALA. The survey also asked the industry-standard Net Promoter Score, which is a measure of user experience that estimates the ratio of promoters vs detractors of a company. The ALA received a 32.1 Net Promoter Score. Scores greater than 20 indicate a great user experience. We are grateful to our users who contributed their feedback to inform these results.

In Conclusion

I'd like to thank our advisory board and the ALA management team for their contribution to Meeting #19.

Professor David Cantrill
Chair, Atlas of Living Australia
Advisory Board,
December 2023